

In the Supreme Court of Iowa

FILED

JAN 14 2015

**In the Matter of Establishment of)
and Appointments to the)
Guardianship and)
Conservatorship Reform)
Task Force)**

Order

CLERK SUPREME COURT

Iowa's guardianship and conservatorship system is one of the most important functions of the judicial branch of government. Court appointed guardians and conservators must make personal and financial decisions on behalf of vulnerable adults and children who lack the capacity to make such decisions. The courts have an ongoing responsibility to monitor guardianships and conservatorships to assure that these adults and children receive appropriate care and protection.

In Iowa there are currently 22,000 open guardianship and conservatorship cases. It is projected that this number will rise substantially due to demographic trends. These trends include a large and rapidly growing population of older Iowans with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias requiring guardianship and conservatorship services.

There has been increasing recognition at both national and state levels of the need for guardianship and conservatorship reform. For example, the Third National Guardianship Summit, sponsored by the National Center for State Courts and other national organizations, issued recommendations and standards calling for actions by courts, legislatures, and other entities. State supreme courts are increasingly playing a leadership role in addressing the challenges confronting the courts with respect to guardianships and conservatorships.

To this end, the supreme court establishes the Guardianship and Conservatorship Reform Task Force (Task Force) to review Iowa's guardianship

and conservatorship laws and procedures in order to ensure the system is efficient and responsive to the needs of Iowans. To accomplish this mission, the Task Force will:

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of Iowa's guardianship and conservatorship laws and practices.
- Examine guardianship and conservatorship laws and practices in other jurisdictions, including standards and recommendations of national organizations.
- Develop recommendations for effective and efficient guardianship and conservatorship laws, practices, and procedures.
- Develop recommendations to foster continuous improvement to the guardianship and conservatorship system to ensure it is responsive to future generations of Iowans.

To organize and oversee this effort, the court appoints the following persons to serve as the Task Force Steering Committee:

Honorable Bruce B. Zager, Justice, Iowa Supreme Court, Waterloo, Chair.

Honorable Jeffrey Larson, Chief Judge, Fourth Judicial District, Council Bluffs.

Honorable Cynthia Danielson, District Judge, Mount Pleasant.

Honorable Craig Block, District Associate Probate Judge, Ankeny.

Gail Agrawal, Dean, University of Iowa College of Law, Iowa City.

Josephine Gittler, Professor, University of Iowa College of Law, Iowa City.

Ben Ullem, Dean, Drake University Law School, Des Moines.

Jerry Foxhoven, Professor, Drake University Law School, Des Moines.

Greg Kenyon, attorney, Des Moines.

Molly Kottmeyer, Counsel to the Chief Justice, West Des Moines, ex-officio member.

Steering Committee members may be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable travel expenses according to Iowa Court Rules 22.16 through 22.2.

Professors Gittler and Foxhoven will serve as coordinators of the Steering Committee. The court thanks the University of Iowa College of Law and the

Drake University Law School for organizational and financial support of the Task Force.

The Task Force Steering Committee will provide the supreme court with recommendations for appointment of additional members of Task Force workgroups by June 1, 2015. The Steering Committee will consider gender, geographic, and racial diversity in making its recommendations. The Task Force Steering Committee will provide the supreme court with recommendations for the convening of an Iowa Guardianship and Conservatorship Summit of the members of the Task Force Steering Committee and work groups.

Dated this 14th day of January, 2015.

The Supreme Court of Iowa

By Mark S. Cady
Mark S. Cady, Chief Justice

Cc: